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“The Yogin’s aim in the sciences that make for knowledge should be to discover and understand the workings of the Divine Consciousness-Puissance in man and creatures and things and forces, her creative significances, her execution of the mysteries, the symbols in which she arranges the manifestation.”


I have already told you, explained to you, that outer forms, if looked at not in themselves, for themselves, in their outer appearance alone, but as the expression of a deeper and more lasting reality, all these forms — as indeed all circumstances and events — all become symbolic of the Force which is behind and uses them to express itself. There is not a single circumstance, not a form, not an action, not a movement which is not symbolic of something deeper, something which stands behind and which, normally, ought to animate all action.

For a certain state of consciousness there is not a single word, not a gesture, not an action which does not express a deeper or higher reality, more lasting, more essential, more true; and once one has seen and felt that, everything takes on a meaning, and one sees more clearly how things ought to be organised, arranged, so that a deeper truth may express itself still better than it does at present.

“The Yogin’s aim in the Arts should not be a mere aesthetic, mental or vital gratification, but, seeing the Divine everywhere, worshipping it with a revelation of the meaning of its works, to express that One Divine in gods and men and creatures and objects.”

Ibid., p. 133
Questions and Answers

*How can we “express that One Divine”?*

It depends on the subject one wants to express: gods, men or things.

When one paints a picture or composes music or writes poetry, each one has his own way of expression. Every painter, every musician, every poet, every sculptor has or ought to have a unique, personal contact with the Divine, and through the work which is his speciality, the art he has mastered, he must express this contact in his own way, with his own words, his own colours. For himself, instead of copying the outer form of Nature, he takes these forms as the covering of something else, precisely of his relationship with the realities which are behind, deeper, and he tries to make them express that. Instead of merely imitating what he sees, he tries to make them speak of what is behind them, and it is this which makes all the difference between a living art and just a flat copy of Nature.

Mother contemplates a flower she is holding in her hand. It is the golden champak flower (*Michelia champaka*).

Have you noticed this flower?

- It has twelve petals in three rows of four.
- We have called it “Supramental psychological perfection”.
- I had never noticed that it had three rows: a small row like this, another one a little larger and a third one larger still. They are in gradations of four: four petals, four petals, four petals.
- Well, if one indeed wants to see in the forms of Nature a symbolic expression, one can see a centre which is the supreme Truth, and a triple manifestation — because four indicates manifestation — in three superimposed worlds: the outermost — these are the largest petals, the lightest in colour — that is a physical world, then a vital world and a mental world, and then at the centre, the supramental Truth.
- And you can discover all kinds of other analogies.
Is that all?

Mother, about the division of works, Sri Aurobindo writes here: “A Yoga turned towards an all-embracing realisation of the Supreme will not despise the works or even the dreams, if dreams they are, of the Cosmic Spirit or shrink from the splendid toil and many-sided victory which he has assigned to himself in the human creature. But its first condition for this liberality is that our works in the world too must be part of the sacrifice offered to the Highest and to none else, to the Divine Shakti and to no other Power, in the right spirit and with the right knowledge, by the free soul and not by the hypnotised bondslave of material Nature. If a division of works has to be made, it is between those that are nearest to the heart of the sacred flame and those that are least touched or illumined by it because they are more at a distance, or between the fuel that burns strongly or brightly and the logs that if too thickly heaped on the altar may impede the ardour of the fire by their damp, heavy and diffused abundance.”

The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 132

Psychologically, to what does this division correspond in our life?

I suppose it is different for each one. So each one must find those activities which increase his aspiration, his consciousness, his deeper knowledge of things, and those which, on the contrary, mechanise him and bring him back more thoroughly into a purely material relation with things.

It is difficult to make a general rule.

That means that everything ought to be done exactly, as an offering?
Questions and Answers

Truly speaking, it depends more on the way of doing a thing than on the thing itself.

You take up some work which is quite material, like cleaning the floor or dusting a room; well, it seems to me that this work can lead to a very deep consciousness if it is done with a certain feeling for perfection and progress; while other work considered of a higher kind as, for example, studies or literary and artistic work, if done with the idea of seeking fame or for the satisfaction of one's vanity or for some material gain, will not help you to progress. So this is already a kind of classification which depends more on the inner attitude than on the outer fact. But this classification can be applied to everything.

Of course, there is a kind of work which is done only for purely pecuniary and personal reasons, like the one — whatever it may be — which is done to earn a living. That attitude is exactly the one Sri Aurobindo compares with the damp logs of wood which are heaped so thick the flame cannot leap up. It has something dark and heavily dull about it.

And this brings us to something which I have already told you several times, but which presents a problem not yet solved by circumstances. I think I have already spoken to you about it, but still I shall speak about it again this evening because of this sentence of Sri Aurobindo's.

At the beginning of my present earthly existence I came into contact with many people who said that they had a great inner aspiration, an urge towards something deeper and truer, but that they were tied down, subjected, slaves to that brutal necessity of earning their living, and that this weighed them down so much, took up so much of their time and energy that they could not engage in any other activity, inner or outer. I heard this very often, I saw many poor people — I don't mean poor from the monetary point of view, but poor because they felt imprisoned in a material necessity, narrow and deadening.

I was very young at that time, and I always used to tell myself that if ever I could do it, I would try to create a little world — oh!
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quite a small one, but still... a small world where people would be able to live without having to be preoccupied with food and lodging and clothing and the imperative necessities of life, so as to see whether all the energies freed by this certainty of a secure material living would turn spontaneously towards the divine life and the inner realisation.

Well, towards the middle of my life — at least, what is usually the middle of a human life — the means were given to me and I could realise this, that is, create such conditions of life. And I have come to this conclusion, that it is not this necessity which hinders people from consecrating themselves to an inner realisation, but that it is a dullness, a tamas, a lack of aspiration, a miserable laxity, an I-don’t-care attitude, and that those who face even the hardest conditions of life are sometimes the ones who react most and have the intensest aspiration.

That’s all. I am waiting for the contrary to be proved to me. I would very much like to see the contrary but I haven’t yet seen it. As there are many energies which are not utilised, since this terrible compulsion of having something to eat or a roof to sleep under or clothes on one’s back does not exist — as one is sure of all that — there is a whole mass of energies which are not utilised for that; well, they are spent in idle stupidities. And of these, the foolishness which seems to me the most disastrous is to keep one’s tongue going: chatter, chatter, chatter. I haven’t known a place where they chatter more than here, and say everything they should not say, busy themselves with things they should not be concerned with. And I know it is merely an overflow of unused energy.

That is all.

So the division in works is perhaps not quite what one thinks....